

(Washington, DC)— Today Congresswoman Gwen Moore, Vice Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Women, will take action to defend the rights of Afghani women and girls by offering an amendment on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to the Foreign Relations Reauthorization bill (H.R. 2410). Moore's amendment would strengthen language in the bill condemning recent legislation passed in Afghanistan that would dangerously undermine the fundamental human rights for women and girls in that country.

"Everyday Afghani women are in a constant struggle to keep themselves and their families safe" Congresswoman Moore said. "This year's Foreign Relations Reauthorization comes at a time of unprecedented change in our outreach efforts to our global neighbors, and will set the course of US involvement in the international community for the year ahead. My amendment helps ensure that those who are most vulnerable in this war torn country see the United States as a partner, and not a barrier, in bettering their lives" the Congresswoman said.

The Moore amendment would call attention to recent actions by the Afghani government that would significantly restrict the basic human rights of Afghan women and girls, as well as humiliate their personal dignity. The Shi'ite Personal Status Law that passed the Afghan parliament earlier this year would, among other things, condone marital rape and child marriage, restrict a woman's ability to leave her house, and tie a woman's legal standing in the community directly to her husband. The measure is widely seen by the international community as wreaking havoc on fundamental human rights, and has been condemned by world leaders and aid organizations. It is currently under review by Afghan President Karzai.

"The United States has lost hundreds of brave men and women in Afghanistan, and has spent billions of dollars in our efforts to establish institutions that protect and promote fundamental human rights in that country. I was horrified to hear about this legislation that passed the Afghani Parliament that seemingly legalized marital rape and restricted the free mobility of women and girls. Actions that limit and suppress fundamental human rights of anyone – including women and girls - undermine the intent of US and international aid, and create unnecessary challenges to future goodwill" Moore said.

The House is expected to debate and vote on Moore's amendment sometime this afternoon.

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